

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Health, Social Care and Inclusion Health Scrutiny Panel
DATE: 12 February 2009

RE: Domiciliary Care

Purpose

To update Members on the contractual arrangements for the provision of domiciliary care in the Borough and to report on progress made in securing further providers.

Capacity in Domiciliary Care

Since the new contracts were issued in October 2008, one provider has ceased to operate following a Section 20 closure by the regulators, Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI), and a further two have been suspended until they fully comply with the standards required for them to maintain their registration. This has resulted in reduced capacity, particularly in end of life care, and raises concerns about the vulnerability and sustainability in the market. Some service users have had a change of provider and we have had a number of complaints about unreliability and poor delivery of care. In order to secure additional capacity, an invitation to tender was issued and six providers have been shortlisted and will proceed to interview and assessment.

In the meantime, we are working with CSCI to ascertain why there appears to be a shortage of good quality domiciliary care available and how we might help to raise the standards and improve the quality available locally. Whilst we know that this situation is not unique to Walsall and colleagues in other parts of the West Midlands report similar experiences, we are eager to secure a range of care that best meets the needs of our service users and their carers. We anticipate that one solution may be to provide a greater range of training as well as direct support to those agencies who have limited internal resources and we are also considering the option of developing more specialised in-house homecare.

A full review and a “lessons learnt” exercise has been arranged, together with a formal liaison meeting with the CSCI inspectors to exchange information and experiences.

Recommendations

That the Panel receives a further briefing in April which will include the outcomes of the proceedings outlined above.

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